

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04198 01 OF 02 251312Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 AGRE-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 IO-13 SAA-01 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 HA-05 FDRE-00 /124 W
-----047478 251339Z /46

R 251236Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8877
INFO USDOC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ATHENS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4198

ATHENS FOR RTDO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, EAID, EWWT, LE
SUBJ: BEIRUT PORT STATUS

REF: (A) BEIRUT 4170, (B) BEIRUT 4123

1. SUMMARY. BEIRUT PORT REMAINED CLOSED TO GENERAL SHIPPING JULY 25. GRAIN VESSEL PACIFIC IMPORTER MORRED JULY 24 TO BEGIN OFFLOADING PL-RIP WHEAT. IMPASSE CONTINUES ON PORT SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS; LAF SECURITY FORCE IN PORT HAS BEEN INCREASED. CUSTOMS REVENUES FROM PORT ARE INTERRUPTED. CHRISTIAN MILITIAS HAVE REPLACED ADF AS DOMINANT GROUND FORCE ADJACENT TO PORT. PORT NOT DEPENDABLE FOR EMBASSY PURPOSES. END SUMMARY.

2. BEIRUT PORT REMAINED CLOSED TO GENERAL SHIPPING JULY 25. APPROX ONE DOZEN SHIPS AT ANCHOR OUTSIDE BREAKWATER AWAIT ENTRY, WHICH BEIRUT PRESS PREDICTS WILL BE POSSIBLE IN THREE-FOUR DAYS. MARINE ACCESS TO PORT SINCE JULY 2 CONFINED TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04198 01 OF 02 251312Z

GRAIN SHIPS (REFTELS). LATEST IS MV PACIFIC IMPORTER WHICH BERTHED 1100 HOURS JULY 24 AND BEGAN OFFLOADING DIRECTLY INTO TRUCKS SINCE GRAIN ELEVATOR IS FULL. GRAIN TRUCKS USE EASTERN GATE LOCATED IN CHRISTIAN-DOMINATED AREA. LAND ACCESS TO PORT IS RESTRICTED TO PORT OFFICIALS AND GRAIN TRUCKS. ON JULY 24 CERTAIN SHIPPING AGENTS GAINED ENTRY, BUT WORKERS ATTEMPTING TO ENTER PORT WERE TURNED AWAY BY KATAEB MILITIA-

MEN. LEBANESE NAVY FROGMEN JULY 24 SEARCHED BASINS FOR UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE.

3. PORT WILL REMAIN CLOSED PENDING RESOLUTION OF NEGOTIATIONS INVOLVING KATAEB AND GOL OVER COMPOSITION OF LAF SECURITY FORCE WITHIN PORT. AS REPORTED IN SITREPS, LAF DESIGNATED 100-MAN CONTINGENT FROM SIDON UNDER A MUSLIM CAPTAIN TO SECURE PORT JULY 18. AFTER KATAEB OBJECTIONS, LAF INTRODUCED A 20- MAN CHRISTIAN UNIT FROM SARBA BARRACKS TO IMPROVE CONFES- SIONAL BALANCE, BUT OTHER PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM UNITS HAVE SINCE BEEN ADDED. FLAVOR OF CONFLICT WAS REVEALED JULY 19 IN BEIRUT PRESS REPORT GIVING TRANSCRIPT OF AN ALLEGEDLY INTERCEPTED RADIO CONVERSATION BETWEEN KATAEB MILITARY LEADER BACHIR GEMAYEL AND MILITIA COMMANDER NEAR PORT. COM- MANDER ADVISED BACHIR, "WE OBJECT TO THIS (LAF) UNIT. THEY ARE TAKING OVER THE SILO AND GATES 1 AND 9. YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS TO US. THAT IS WHY WE ASKED OUR MEN TO CONFRONT THEM. WE WANTED THE ARMY TO BE BROUGHT FROM OUR AREAS." BACHIR: "LET THEM IN, SO OTHERS MAY ENTER THE AREA. PLEASE FACILITATE THE PORT MISSION." COMMANDER: "YOU MUST SEE THE TYPES IN THE UNIT AND READ THEIR NAMES. IF YOU SAW THEM, YOU WOULD REALIZE THAT WE CANNOT BE HAPPY WITH THEM." AGREEMENT ON PORT SECURITY APPEARS INCOMPLETE. KATAEB HOLDS TRUMPS SINCE PORT CANNOT REOPEN UNLESS MILITIAMEN ALLOW WORKERS ACCESS TO IT.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04198 01 OF 02 251312Z

4. SHIPS DIVERTED FROM BEIRUT JULY 2-18 UNLOADED CARGO AT PORTS RANGING FROM SIDON AND TRIPOLI TO LATAKIA, LIMASSOL, PIRAEUS AND GENOA. WAR RISK SURCHARGE FOR SHIPS INTENDING TO CALL AT BEIRUT HAS RISEN FROM .025 PERCENT TO ONE PERCENT, EQUAL TO ITS LEVEL IN JANUARY 1977. SOME INSURERE WILL NOT OFFER SERVICES. SHIP DIVERSION/DELAY HAS INTERRUPTED FLOW OF CUSTOMS RECEIPTS TO GOL. CHIEF OF CUSTOMS ESTIMATES UN- COLLECTED REVENUES FOR JULY AT LL 30 MILLION SO FAR. BETTER THAN NORMAL COLLECTIONS AT SMALLER SIDON AND TRIPOLI PORTS HAVE NOT OFFSET REDUCTION EMBODIED IN CARGOES DIVERTED ABROAD. OBSERVERS IN SIDON REPORTED JULY 24 THAT PALESTINIANS HAVE ASSUMED CONTROL OF SIDON PORT OPERATIONS, PLACING THEM ATHWART THOSE REVENUES.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04198 02 OF 02 251315Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 AGRE-00 OMB-01
IO-13 SAA-01 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 FDRE-00 HA-05 /124 W
-----047535 251341Z /46

R 251236Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8878
INFO USDOC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY ATHENS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4198

ATHENS FOR RTDO

5. EMBASSY NOTES THAT PATTERN OF DEPLOYMENT ON GROUND NEAR BEIRUT PORT FAVORS KATAEB MILITIA AT EXPENSE OF ADF CHECKPOINTS FORMERLY PRESENT IN AREA. MILITIA CONTROL APPEARS TO EXTEND ENTIRE LENGTH OF PORT AS FAR WEST AS FORMER ADF CHECKPOINT AT FATTAL BUILDING ON RUE ALLENBY. KATAEB STRENGTH OBVIOUSLY SUFFICIENT TO INFLUENCE COMPOSITION OF LAF SECURITY CONTINGENT WITHIN PORT. ALTHOUGH SYRIANS RETAIN CAPABILITY TO CLOSE PORT USING MORTARS SITUATED IN PHOENICIA HOTEL PARKING LOT, OR DIRECT ROCKET FIRE FROM MURR TOWER, KATAEB CONTROLS THE GROUND AROUND THE GATES, IF CHRISTIAN FORCES CANNOT KEEP PORT OPEN AGAINST SYRIAN ARTILLERY, THEY HAVE DEMONSTRATED THEY CAN KEEP IT CLOSED UNILATERALLY UNDER SITZKRIEG OR LULL CONDITIONS. IMPLICATIONS HERE ARE SERIOUS. CLOSURE DENIES GOL REVENUES THAT PROVIDE 30-40 PERCENT OF STATE'S INCOME. WITHOUT BEIRUT PORT, GOL BUDGET IS A FANTASY, GENERAL COMMERCE IS BROADLY DISRUPTED AND MERCHANT BANKING ATROPHIES. THE PORT IS AN ENGINE BOTH OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04198 02 OF 02 251315Z

EVENTS OF JULY HAVE DEMONSTRATED ITS VULNERABILITY. CHANGED DISPOSITION OF FORCES NEAR IT INCREASES PROSPECTS THAT IT WILL BECOME TARGET OF MILITARY ACTION OR LOOTING BY FACTIONS IF EVENTS REPEAT THEMSELVES IN COMING WEEKS. MEANWHILE, ITS CONTINUED CLOSURE WEAKENS THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN RELATION TO THE KATAEB.

6. PORT FOR EMBASSY SHIPMENTS. WE ARE EXPLORING ALTERNATE

SUPPLY CHANNELS. WILL ADVISE.

DECON 7/30/81.

PARKER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DATA, CARGO HANDLING, PORTS, PORT FACILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 25 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT04198
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780304-0964
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780721/aaaaargm.tel
Line Count: 174
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fc04e76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BEIRUT 4170, 78 BEIRUT 4123
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1888859
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BEIRUT PORT STATUS
TAGS: PINT, EAID, EWWT, LE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fc04e76c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014